DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 059 001 RC 005 940

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TITLE Some Instructional Strategies for the Cross-Cultural Classroom.
INSTITUTION Alaska State Dept. of Education, Juneau.
PUB DATE Aug 71
NOTE 24p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS American Indian Culture; *American Indians; Area Studies; Cross Cultural Studies; *Cultural Factors; *Eskimos; Questionnaires; Rural Education; *Student Teacher Relationship; *Teaching Techniques
IDENTIFIERS Alaska

ABSTRACT

Based on questionnaire data showing of 64% (114 respondents) return from all teachers in small village schools operated by the State of Alaska and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, this paper describes instructional strategies for new teachers entering the Alaskan cross-cultural community classroom. The paper also suggests how the instructional methods harmonize with village students' learning styles in regard to (1) personalism (experiment with ways to harmonize personal teaching style with students' learning styles), (2) competitiveness (devise teaching methods to cope with passive students), (3) joking (use this native method of correction in a two-sided manner), (4) project-reward work rhythm (assign concentrated work followed by material rewards and relaxation), (5) observational learning (use image-based instruction), (6) village-based anchoring ideas (relate instructional material to students' village experiences), and (7) parental involvement (inform parents as to the school's why's and how's). The appendix shows a copy of the questionnaire sent at the end of the 1969-70 school year. (MJB)

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SOME INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE CROSS–CULTURAL CLASSROOM

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August, 1971

RC005940

PREFACE

At the end of the 1969-70 school year, Dr. J. S. Kleinfeld of the University of Alaska sent out a questionnaire to teachers in the small village schools operated by the State and the BIA. This publication is the result of her analysis of the 114 responses which she received.

The majority of the responses came from smaller village schools in the areas inhabited by Eskimos. Because many authorities have indicated that Eskimos are not competitive by nature, a measure of the degree of competitiveness was included in the questionnaire. We want to carefully point out, however, that the inclusion of these questions does not mean that the author or the Department endorses the use of competition as a regular teaching strategy.

Teachers in multi-grade classrooms of necessity practice individualized instruction and "open-classroom" procedures, but these instructional strategies are not mentioned here because they are applicable to more classrooms than those in which Alaska Native children predominate.

We hope that this publication will prove helpful to teachers coming into Alaska village schools for the first time.

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Alaska Department of Education
August, 1971

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE CROSS–CULTURAL CLASSROOM

As increasing numbers of rural Indian and Eskimo students leave the village to attend school in a larger community, increasing numbers of teachers find themselves in a cross-cultural classroom. The teacher in this type of classroom must consider a difficult question: What instructional strategies harmonize rather than conflict with the learning style of children from a different cultural background? As many teachers have found, the instructional style which seems natural, which has proved successful in other teaching experiences, may not prove effective in the cross-cultural classroom.

An early teaching experience of my own with Eskimo children illustrates the unanticipated effects of traditional teaching methods. Like Alice in *Behind the Looking Glass*, everything I did seemed to come out just the opposite of what I expected. For example, at first I expressed satisfaction with a student's academic accomplishments, as I did in other classrooms, by such a casual remark as, "Good, Johnny." To my astonishment and chagrin, the Eskimo child so singled out from his peer group looked away in embarrassment and refused to continue the assignment. I found that such public praise would reinforce learning only if it were directed toward a group rather than an individual student. When I said, "Johnny and Dan and Andrew are doing fine work," the three smiled shyly at each other and worked even harder.

This incident, as many teachers may recall from teaching manuals and orientation sessions, could probably be explained by traditional egalitarian values. Standing out from the group through individual achievement is considered bad manners.[1] However, as many teachers would also point out, sometimes this form of individual, public praise is highly motivating. The critical point is that such traditional values, like many other aspects of village life, are changing. Indian and Eskimo children from different villages and even within the same village respond differently. The instructional problem in a cross-cultural classroom, therefore, becomes

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[1] Seymour Parker, "Eskimo and Indian Values and Motivation for Education in Three Selected Alaskan Villages". In Charles Ray, *Alaska Native Secondary School Drop Outs.* College: University of Alaska, 1962.

extremely complex. The teacher can rely with assurance neither on the standard information about traditional cultural values nor upon his own experiences in a western school situation. Each teacher must experiment with different instructional strategies in his particular classroom and carefully observe their effects.

In order to increase exchange of ideas concerning effective cross-cultural instructional strategies, a questionnaire was sent to teachers in every Alaskan village.[2] The questionnaire requested teachers to describe especially promising teaching methods and also to comment upon their particular students' willingness to compete in class, an issue of frequent concern. This paper attempts to summarize this information and to suggest how the recommended instructional methods harmonize with village students' learning style.

Personalism

Most village teachers emphasized that the key to effective cross-cultural teaching was to develop a personal relationship with students. This personalism led to an informal classroom climate where reticent, wary students usually became sufficiently comfortable to speak in class. Developing personal relationships, teachers pointed out, need not conflict with professionalism in teaching. Indeed, since personalism was a necessary condition for optimal learning in a cross-cultural classroom, it was necessary to professional success.

Personalized teaching is, of course, likely to increase performance in any student. Like most of us, students will do things for a personal friend which they would not feel obligated to do solely on the basis of the teacher-student role relationship. Developing personal relationships with students, however, seems to be more critical to learning in a cross-cultural classroom. Indian and Eskimo students who have grown up in a small village are accustomed to the primary group or intimate relationships characteristic of the small town rather than the secondary or limited role relationships characteristic of a larger city. In a village, people

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[2] This questionnaire was sent at the end of the 1969-70 school year. Village school response rate was 64 per cent (114 questionnaires).
See appendix, page 21.

tend to know each other all of their lives and relate to each other as total personalities rather than in fragmented, limited roles such as "postmaster" or "teacher." With a stranger, especially a "gussuk" with whom past relationships have not necessarily been rewarding, village students are typically fearful and cautious, waiting silently for the person to define himself before they risk defining themselves.

Village teachers suggested several methods for creating a personal, informal learning climate in the classroom but cautioned that teachers should not attempt to establish the instant, superficial personalism characteristic of relationships in an urban society. Developing rapport and trust in a cross-cultural classroom was a gradual process. Most teachers emphasized that, especially at first when rapport and trust was developing, they tried to avoid a formal teaching situation—students massed at their desks while the instructor taught from a distance. Personal relationships were fostered rather by individual instruction where teachers were in close physical proximity to their students:

> *The most effective teaching method for Athabascan students is on a one-to-one basis whereby the teacher is talking to the student as an individual person.*
>
> *Ken Williams*
> *Tok*

> *I find a much greater need here for a personal relationship with each child to encourage the children to have and express ideas and to develop a good self image. Too many of these children have never been talked with—only to, and few have any real concept of themselves as creative, thinking, enjoyable people.*
>
> *Marjorie L. Pratt*
> *Metlakatla*

> *Historically, a good share of Eskimo education was on a one-to-one basis. I have found it possible to progress from all class activities to individualized study in short, specific*

units. I have never had success with large group math instruction. Even students who somehow never did learn basic multiplication facts and are in the 8th grade respond to individualized instruction. It is my impression that there is not really a lot of close communcation between Eskimo teenagers and their parents or other adults (sound familiar?). ...when a teacher even attempts to teach individually, he is building a very special relationship with each student in the class.

James F. Zuelow
Selawik

Several teachers pointed out that a child who would freeze like a rabbit caught in a flashlight when a question was directed toward him in front of the class would talk when taught in a small, informal group:

I like to use a bench six to seven feet long for the students on one side of a table with myself on a chair opposite. Four to six students assemble at one time. They will communicate here—otherwise many would not (when) sitting in their desks with me at the head.

Eddie Hooley
Kokhanok

The Ambler children dislike performing in front of the entire class, but do well in small groups—or in an informal situation.

G. Stalder
Ambler

In Tetlin, small groups are the only way to secure responses. Here the children talk readily with the Educational Aide from the village but refuse to answer me or any stranger or Non-Native.

Don J. Abbott
Tetlin

Teachers cautioned, however, that instructors should take into account friendship ties among the children when forming small groups. Otherwise, unfriendly social relationships might interfere with learning:

> *Working in small groups, working in partners (is very effective) although one has to be careful of old rivalries and bad feelings of long standing interfering with learning processes.*
>
> *Aedene Arthur*
> *Tanana*

> *I believe that the idea of Eskimo students being able to work well in artificial groups is entirely myth; they do, however, work well in informal, voluntary groups. The classroom, unfortunately, is not usually voluntary or informal. By keeping group work brief and to the point and then going into individualized and friendship group oriented instruction you are building on the child's past experiences with groups.*
>
> *James Zuelow*
> *Selawik*

The barriers of the formal teacher-student role could also be broken down through such methods as reversing roles, learning a few words of the Eskimo language, and especially introducing the teacher's personal experiences in the classroom. As one teacher pointed out, students may be very curious about the teacher's background just as the teacher is about the student's. However, in some areas it is considered bad manners to ask direct questions about personal matters (a social rule which teachers frequently violate).

> *The most effective method that I have found in teaching the students is to let them present different parts of chapters. I let them play the role of the teacher and I play the role of the student. After experimenting with*

many different methods I feel that this is the most successful.

Alan K. Wells
Unalakleet

My Eskimo teacher-aide has aided me greatly this year—translating for me and teaching me some useful classroom Eskimo words and phrases which are very effective with the children and they love me to speak in Eskimo. They seem to try harder to learn English for me since I'm trying to learn Eskimo for them.

Alice S. Chaney
Manokotak

Personal experiences of the teacher with pictures or slides she has taken herself seem to have much more meaning. If I can say I have seen or I have been there they accept it as a real event or place rather than just another story.

Bernice Jacobson
Port Heiden

Competitiveness[3]

When a rural Indian and Eskimo student sits passively in the classroom and refuses to answer a teacher's question, teachers often assume that such behavior is based on the well-publicized cooperative rather than competitive traditional value orientation. That Native students "won't compete," however, is a truism that may no longer be generally true. Such traditional values are changing. In addition, competition may be expressed more subtly than among western students, and teachers often overlook it. Behavior interpreted as non-competitiveness based on egalitarian values may actually have quite different causes. Students'

[3] The questionnaire contained the item: Many people say that Alaska Native students "won't compete". Many others say that this is a myth and that Native students do compete in the classroom. To what extent do your students compete in school? In what circumstances do they and do they not compete?

refusal to participate may derive rather from their fear of failure or from resistance to offensive teaching methods.

While egalitarianism may be a traditional value orientation of Eskimos and Athabascan Indians, in many areas white contact has led to the acceptance of western style competitive behavior. Experienced teachers who had taught in several different villages pointed out that egalitarianism was pronounced primarily in the small villages with little western contact. Students from the more acculturated villages, in contrast, were often as competitive and as desirous for public praise as Caucasian students. They were especially competitive in a mixed classroom when they had a realistic hope of outdistancing the non-Native students.

My wife and I have taught out here in the "bush" with the BIA for the past fourteen years, and this has been our observation in regard to this particular question: In those villages where the people are all full blood Eskimos, the children do not compete in the classroom. There seems to be a stigma attached to "trying to be better than someone else," and we have often heard this remark. On the other hand in those villages where there has been a strong "white" influence in the past such as in mining and freighting, the children, as a result of inter-marrying, ranged from one-fourth to three-fourths Eskimo. Among these children there was keen competition in the classroom. I would also have to add that these children went on to high school and for the most part had excellent academic records. As I mentioned this has only been our observation over the past fourteen years.

Arthur H. Hyde
Shaktoolik

... in the smaller villages students don't compete to the degrees that they do in the larger ones. In smaller villages the trend is to keep everyone as near equal as possible, certainly not show anyone up. But with the students from the more progressive families in the large

villages the students compete strongly with each other and more so especially if non-Native students are involved. During the past four years at Barrow School two of the different graduating classes have had co-honor students, one being Native and the other non-Native, and these students were capable of competing and holding their own with any group of students.

Charles F. Hendrix
Barrow

In many cases, village students do compete but teachers are unaware of it because competition may be expressed more subtly than in western culture. What is disapproved of may not be winning but rather boasting about it. In one village, for example, I observed students playing a game in which one student held up an arithmetic flashcard, and two others tried to call out the answer first. Obviously, these students were competing. However, I was surprised to see that no "winner" was ever announced. At the end of the allotted time, the student who was ahead merely got up, took over the position of the student showing the cards, and the game continued. Several village teachers pointed out that such subtle forms of competition occurred:

I think teachers overlook competitiveness in school because the kids are quieter than elsewhere. They contain their pride in "outdoing" others well. They will not boast of their prowess in an area.

LaMont E. Albertson
Elaine H. Albertson
Aniak

I have seen instances of competition in some of the students. I think these instances are not as common or blatant as would be found in the average suburban school. The competition I have seen was usually between friends who are really working cooperatively, quite often; or between students who

are not so friendly, and are trying to show each other up.

Eli R. Ribich
Toksook Bay

I find a definite "silent competition" with my classes. The students will not be direct and ask another student his grade but they will glance at the grades of another student and compare.

Frank Riedel
Egegik

In sum, teachers believed that the stereotype of non-competitiveness was no longer generally true, although egalitarian values remained strong in more traditional villages. When Native students sit passively in class and refuse to answer a teacher's question, therefore, the explanation for this behavior is not necessarily egalitarianism. Students may refuse to answer a question, for example, not because they do not wish to do better than others ("egalitarianism") but rather because they would very much like to do better than others but feel they have no hope of succeeding ("fear of failure"). One loses less face not to answer at all than to answer incorrectly.

Alaska Native students are just like kids anywhere. They will compete when they have the tools and skills to compete with. This includes self-assurance and confidence that they have a chance to come out on top; I have found Eskimo people of all ages very competitive in any thing that they are good at.

Dale LeFevre
Mekoryuk

If you can build in the students the feeling that you don't have "to lose face" by competing and not winning, they compete willingly. In each school we have faced this lack of desire to compete and have fought it successfully. The

first few times only a few participate. But as the others see that the losers are not ridiculed or criticized but rather praised for trying, the number competing in a particular project snowballs.

Skip Sonnenberg
Chevak

The meaning of students' refusal to answer may result from yet other causes, for example, passive resistance to the intrusive demands of a teacher who is not trusted. In short, the teacher cannot assume that students' refusal to participate in a lesson involving competition necessarily results from egalitarian values. In many cases, this behavior is based on fear or failure or resistance to what the student perceives as illegitimate demands. By changing his teaching methods, the teacher may be able to change the situation.

In those areas where students would not compete, either because of egalitarian values or because of their fear of failure, teachers strongly recommend individualized instruction. Competing with one's own record rather than against others in the group avoided the embarrassment of outstripping others. In addition, such individualization resulted in setting realistic goals which reduced the child's fear of failure.

I have never found a student who refused to compete with his own record which, I feel, is the only worthwhile competition for schools to indulge in.

Dorothea M. Taylor
Whittier

Most of our students were competitive when the goals were realistic. The first six weeks they seemed uninterested but through individualization of all subject matters it stimulated self-evaluation and determination. This mushroomed into competitive thinking.

Robert G. Carnahan
Joanne W. Carnahan
Venetie

One teacher had succeeded in individualizing his entire classroom schedule:

> *I am firmly convinced that I have found the answer... My classroom is basically organized around six interest centers (LA, art, science, social studies, library, listening, math, with one area which is teacher-dominated). The centers are very flexible and the kids can work independently. They have been placed at certain levels in reading and math, and the reading is a one student—one teacher ratio. In reading, they can go as fast as they can read, and they make their own notebooks for words which they had difficulty in pronouncing and for words which are new and challenging. Within a few days, I had 18 kids working at 18 different places in reading. The same is true in math.*
>
> *The centers are organized around concepts to which the kids have been exposed. They have their own individual schedule each day. They have the freedom to chat without disturbing anyone, and they help one another. They do not have their own individual desks—there are only 8 desks which are used for teacher-dominating session.*
>
> *Richard McKinley*
> *Ft. Yukon*

In addition, a few imaginative teachers pointed out that, where egalitarian values remained strong, they could be used to increase performance among the slower students. Just as the fast student did not want to stand out by overly high performance, neither did the slower student by overly low performance.

> *Some children have liked programmed material quite a bit. Cenco Programmed Learners were quite popular in Kipnuk and Kwethluk but less so in Selawik. Selawik students, however, are not quite so egalitarian. A programmed approach does allow students to work at their own pace while at the same time appearances of being like everyone else are maintained. By all means do not point out how well a given student is*

doing with programmed materials or anything else that might set him apart if the group pressure to conform is very strong. Of course, if over half the group can do something, it is fair game to point out that fact as a means to stimulate the others.

James Zuelow
Selawik

Joking

In Indian and Eskimo villages, joking is frequently used as an indirect method of communicating information that might otherwise cause embarrassment or loss of face. Joking rather than scolding is a central means of village social control, of informing others when they have violated social norms. As Lantis[4] points out, teachers can use such joking cultural patterns to control misbehavior without alienating the students. Joking as a method of social control, however, should work in both directions. By allowing students and villagers to tease him, the teacher can find out when he himself is guilty of violating the village's behavioral rules. Moreover, such joking is a relatively benign outlet for the tensions and hostilities that inevitably arise in the teacher-student relationship.

> *Experiment in changing your brand of humor. There is constant teasing in a normal village, teasing being an important means of social control. Older children tease younger children, sometimes lightly, sometimes meanly. Many Americans find it difficult to tease without being harsh or actually hostile. Let people make fun of you, use you as a dupe, a fall-guy ... (p. 52).*

Village teachers emphasized the importance of humor in resolving many types of conflicts arising in the classroom.

> *The major means by which differences in viewpoint can be resolved in the classroom is through humor. Not sarcastic humor by any means but through what would almost be con-*

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[4] ***A Positive Self-Image for the Alaska Native Learner,*** Education Workshop, Juneau Area Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1968.

sidered "slap-stick"—"A smile is worth much more than 1,000 words" particularly from the teacher.

Ken Williams
Tok

This guy dropped a bag of peanut shells on the floor. Now, I knew if I stood there and ordered him to pick them up, we'd both still be standing there. Instead, I said to him jokingly, "Hey, there, make like a magician and make those peanut shells disappear while I go and get my notebook." They were gone when I got back.

Jack Leonard (interview)
Nome

Teachers pointed out that joking could be used as an indirect means of communication in a diversity of delicate social situations. Teasing, for example, can be used as an overture toward the development of a personal relationship. Since the joking situation is by definition not serious, rejection by either the teacher or the student does not risk loss of face. Where direct praise can embarrass a student before his peers, a joke can convey the compliment but indirectly. For example, one skillful teacher introduced me to a conspicuously industrious student by loudly announcing "Yeah, that's Jim, that's my lazy one." Teachers cautioned, however, that such irony must be broad because Native students may be unfamiliar with English subtleties and could take the joke literally.

Project-Reward Work Rhythm

The traditional rhythm of work in Eskimo and Indian villages was a period of intense effort on a specific task followed by concrete reward and relaxation. The work rhythm derived from the economic cycle where such activities as hunting and preparing the meat required concentrated work for short periods of time but was followed by a feast and rest.

Several teachers recommended adapting classroom tasks to this project-reward rhythm of work. They set specific learning tasks with clearly

defined goals and demanded intensive work. This period of concentrated effort, however, was followed by material rewards and free time for relaxation. More could be accomplished through this project-reward work cycle than through a monotonously steady work routine.

Material rewards have worked wonders with younger Eskimo children in all four villages. Money, M&M's, cookies (do you recall the **Anchorage Daily News** *article that said Eskimo children did not know what cookies were? A remarkable example of over-generalization) or anything material the children like will nearly always make teaching a specific thing that much easier.*

James Zuelow
Selawik

We used a pocket chart on the wall filled with cards on which were various high frequency activities such as painting, listening, reading, modeling clay, puzzles, etc. The children were given tickets for improvement over their own previous performances and for good behavior, etc. Each ticket was good for 2 minutes of free time at the chosen activity.

Skip Sonnenberg
Chevak

We have weekly contests with candy and other prizes and this seems to strongly motivate the students.

Malcolm Gibbons
Pitka's Point

Observational Learning

Indian and Eskimo children tend to have more an observational than a verbal question and answer learning style. The question and answer learning style is necessary in a technologically complex society because

work tends to be fragmented into specialized tasks so its purpose is not apparent and tend also to be performed outside of a child's view. In the village context, children could learn easily by observation, by watching adults' activities and waiting for the total situation to inform them of the meaning of the actions. In such a learning situation, extensive verbal explanation was unnecessary and questions might be considered foolish.[5] As a Savoonga villager points out:

> *For instance, if a child is given (written) instruction of how to put the tape on the tape recorder here, the child would bog down trying to read the instructions. If a child is shown by the teacher doing the work, the child could do it right after the teacher removes his hands from the machine. That's the way all the Eskimos on St. Lawrence Island learn.*
>
> *Timothy Gologergen*[6]
> *Savoonga*

This traditional reliance on observation as a means of receiving and storing information may have led to special cognitive strengths in image memory among Eskimos and perhaps other Native groups which enable them to remember what they have seen for long periods of time.[7]

Village teachers stressed that instructional strategies based on observation such as movies, diagrams, and charts were highly effective. Such teaching methods avoided total reliance on English language competence in students for whom English was often a second language. Image-based instruction, of course, also provided a means to present experiences unavailable in a remote village.

> *In our case, a movie is the only meaningful way of presenting such concepts as the great plains, the meaning of factories,*

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5 See Jean L. Briggs, *Never in Anger,* Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1970 for an account of the disturbance she caused in an Eskimo village with her verbal question and answer learning style.

6 *In Nome-Beltz Needs Assessment,* Volume II, Appendix, Alaska Department of Education, 1970, pp. 112-114.

7 These cognitive strengths are more fully discussed in J.S. Kleinfeld, "Cognitive Strengths of Eskimos and Implications for Instruction", Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, Occasional Paper, 1970.

and manufacturing, other countries, living in a city, etc.

John and Shirley Wallace
Nikolai

One of the methods I found successful is: (1) Introduction of material for a new unit; (2) next day a film dealing with the unit; (3) following days—oral reading and discussion of key ideas in the unit plus film strips; (4) a follow-up film, if possible, summarizing the unit; (5) test dealing with the ideas that were covered orally or in the film or film strips; (6) review and discussion of the test.

Frank Riedel
Egegik

Anything with a visual impact increases learning. Few children in the class had the facility in English to benefit greatly from a strictly oral approach.

Mary J. Peralu
Nunapitchuk

A number of teachers also pointed out that image-based instruction was highly effective in building English language competence.

To motivate writing assignments, I have taken motion pictures of the students and rerun them asking for narration. They detest writing but this approach makes it interesting and meaningful.

James P. Gunn
Ruby

Movies of nearly any subject matter are a very effective method for bringing about a class (entire class) discussion. All forms of the language arts are used. This is especially effective if one presents the movie using different methods.

Especially effective, also, is the repetitive showing of the film.

D. Kensey
Togiak

Village-Based Anchoring Ideas

The need to relate new academic material to the student's background experience in the village was emphasized by many teachers. While this recommendation is often made, the theoretical rationale is not always made clear. It is important to relate new material to the students' prior experiences not only because "relevant" academic work increases learning motivation but also because establishing a prior conceptual base is essential for understanding. Unfamiliar information must be integrated into the student's existing conceptual structure by becoming attached to some previous experience or concept—an "anchoring idea"[8] – or it will be merely rote learning that cannot be applied. For most village students, of course, anchoring ideas are likely to derive from village experiences.

I think that by far the most successful method we have found is approaching the lesson from the relationship it does or can have to the lives and background of the students.

Skip Sonnenberg
Chevak

They learn more from science and social studies units which can be related to the tundra or village life. For example, a unit on Alaskan animals was most effective.

Mary J. Peralu
Nunapitchuk

Teachers pointed out that relating academic work to the student's background also stimulated communication.

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[8] David Ausubel, *Educational Psychology: A Cognitive View.* New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

For English language, writing, and reading: current events in the home, school and village. It is quite effective to have children compose news stories. It is of great interest to them, because experience is the real thing to them.

Harold S. Kaveolook
Kaktovik

Having the students write about things familiar to him; men's role vs. women's role, i.e., boat building and fish cleaning, a job of the family members during different seasons. These are areas that with very little encouragement the students work and produce. Once the students begin to write the improvement can be made.

Dennis Corrington
Nome

Parental Involvement

As every teacher knows and much research corroborates, parental encouragement is a central cause of motivation to do well in school. While many village parents desire their children to obtain a good education, they frequently do not know precisely how to encourage their children to do well in school because they are unfamiliar with schoolroom routines and do not understand the meaning of letter grades and achievement test scores.[9] A mere mark on a paper such as a grade is not a reward in itself, a primary reward like food or approval. Grades are secondary rewards; they acquire the capacity to reinforce behavior when they become associated in the student's mind with a primary reward such as parental approval.

Several experienced village teachers reported that they were amazed at the increased motivation of their students after the teacher had visited their homes and explained the meaning of good grades to their parents.

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[9] See Ann Brookman, "A Study of Culture Change in a Contemporary Eskimo Village", unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Columbia University, 1970 for an account of her struggles to answer Emmonak parents' queries about the meaning of the achievement test scores they had received from the departed village teacher.

No one thing has increased the "will to try" and consequent academic progress like the campaign we put on for parental interest and participation. We visited each home and explained report cards, had open houses. Each child invited his parents for one day of school, etc. We noticed an increase in intrinsic motivation that surprised us. As parental interest increases—good grades—become very effective.

Skip Sonnenberg
Chevak

My special method is to visit the home and explain the school work to the parents and enlist their active efforts to hear the child read a little every night. My theory is that children tend to fulfill the parents' expectations of them. Where the parents do not care, do not comprehend, do not work actively to reinforce instruction at school, school is pretty useless. Where parents understand and work actively, even kindergartners learn to read and spell, as well as write. All my success in remedial reading with higher grades was based on the same: work by the parents or siblings. Every family has some member or neighbor who can be convinced to help.

Ada Charlton
Bethel

Conclusion

Cross-cultural teaching, especially in a period of cultural change, presents intricate instructional problems. The teacher must continually experiment with ways to harmonize his own instructional style with the learning style of his students. Many teachers point out that the increased interpersonal awareness which arises from such careful analysis of their own behavior and its effects has unanticipated rewards. Interpersonal skills in Indian and Eskimo villages in some ways may be much

more sophisticated than in western culture. Many teachers have learned from village students how to improve the quality of their own interpersonal relationships outside of the classroom—how to correct without humiliating, how to praise without embarrassing, how to wait without resentment for the development of trust.

APPENDIX

A copy of the questionnaire sent to teachers in every Alaskan Village at the end of the 1969-70 school year

Name of Teacher: _____

Village School: _____

Please circle as many as apply:

Grades Taught K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Students' Ethnic Group:

Eskimo Athabascan Tlingit Haida Aleut Tsimpsian Caucasian

Please answer these questions only in terms of Native students in your class.

1. What teaching methods do you find especially successful with your students? For example, some teachers have mentioned that working in small groups and the village movies are effective teaching devices.

2. Many people say that Alaska Native students "won't compete." Many others say that this is a myth and that Native students do compete in the classroom. To what extent do your students compete in school? In what circumstances do they and do they not compete?

3. Of the following rewards, which are effective in increasing academic motivation in your students? Please circle your choice.

a. Group praise
very effective sometimes effective not effective

b. Individual praise before class
very effective sometimes effective not effective

c. Individual praise in private
very effective sometimes effective not effective

d. Concrete rewards
very effective sometimes effective not effective

e. Good grades
very effective sometimes effective not effective

f. Stars or other awards
very effective sometimes effective not effective

What other rewards strongly motivate your students?

4. Have you noticed any special abilities which your students tend to possess or subject areas where they learn especially quickly?

5. Do your students show particular ability to observe and remember visual detail? If so, how do they show this ability?

6. Is there any change in the classroom behavior or academic abilities of students who are about 11—13 years old? If so, what is this change to what would you attribute it?